



# PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., *State Superintendent*

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**TO** LEA Superintendents  
Charter School Directors

**FROM** Rebecca B. Garland, Deputy State Superintendent *RBG*  
Office of the Deputy State Superintendent

Tammy L. Howard, Director *TH*  
Accountability Services

## **MINIMAL DELAY IN SCORES FOR FALL ENGLISH II AND NORTH CAROLINA FINAL EXAMS (NCFEs) WITH CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE ITEMS (Updated January 7, 2016)**

The attachment to the memo *Minimal Delay in Scores for Fall English II and North Carolina Final Exams (NCFEs) with Constructed Response Items*, originally published on December 9, 2015, has been updated to reflect revised Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) test cycle window dates for September 2016. All other information contained in the attachment and the original December 9 memo are unchanged.

For the 2015–16 school year, some tests in the North Carolina Testing Program include constructed response (CR) items. These items require students to produce a written response, rather than select an answer from a list. Student responses for CR items are distributed to human scorers. As a result, the CR responses are more time-consuming to score than traditional multiple-choice questions, producing a minimal delay in test scores. Due to the scoring of CR items, test scores that will be delayed include the following:

### *End-of-Course:*

- English II

### *North Carolina Final Exams:*

- English III
- Grade 8 Social Studies
- American History: The Founding Principles, Civics, and Economics
- World History
- American History I
- American History II

## **DIVISION OF ACCOUNTABILITY SERVICES**

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Local Education Agencies (LEAs)/charter schools are encouraged to schedule administrations of assessments with CR items at the beginning of the testing window. This will allow maximum time to submit, score, and return test scores. Additionally, the NCTest online delivery mode decreases the time required to submit, score, and return scores. Therefore, Accountability Services strongly recommends LEAs/charter schools administer North Carolina Final Exams (NCFEs) with CR items online; LEAs/charter schools are required to administer the English II end-of-course (EOC) assessment online.

Completed test records for English II online assessments will be submitted electronically to the vendor each night at 7:00 p.m. Completed test records for NCFEs with CR items will be submitted immediately. Vendors will begin scoring the morning after the test record is received and will return the scored online test records electronically to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) within approximately 72 hours (3 business days) of starting the scoring process. Test coordinators should allow 4–5 business days to receive scored online test records. For LEAs/charter schools administering paper-and-pencil tests with CR items, the completed answer sheets must be shipped by LEA/charter school test coordinators to the vendor each test day. The vendors will score all items (i.e., multiple-choice and CR). The scoring process will begin the morning after the test record is received by the vendor. Scored paper-and-pencil test records will be returned electronically to the NCDPI within 7 business days of starting the scoring process. Test coordinators should allow approximately 7–8 business days to receive scored paper-and-pencil records.

The attached table, *English II and North Carolina Final Exam Constructed Response Scoring/Return Dates for 2015–16*, summarizes the scoring windows and score return times for the 2015–16 assessment year.

The scoring period must include time to score the CR items and to return a single score for each student for his or her multiple-choice and constructed response items. Students administered these assessments during fall 2015 and spring 2016 semesters should be assigned “incompletes” until scores are returned from the vendor. The scores must then be used to calculate the final grade for the course and to determine if students are appropriately enrolled in spring 2016 or upcoming fall 2016 courses.

State Board policy GCS-A-016 and GCS-C-003 require public schools to use results from all course specific operational assessments as at least twenty percent (20%) of the student’s final grade for each respective course (with the exception of students following the Occupational Course of Study and end-of-year assessments in grades 3–8). Because test scores may not be returned by the last day of the semester, an exception to this policy will be made for high school seniors graduating at the end of the current semester. LEAs/charter schools may choose not to use the scores from the English II/NCFE assessments that contain CR items as a minimum of 20% to calculate the final grades for seniors. This will allow schools to make graduation decisions in a timely manner.

The NCDPI recognizes the delayed scores may also impact student placement decisions. Course placement decisions should be made in the same way decisions are made for other courses not requiring an EOC assessment or NCFE (e.g., performance on classroom assessments, homework grades). Once these test scores are incorporated as at least 20% of the student’s final grade for the course, the LEA/charter school must determine if the student is inappropriately enrolled in a spring/fall course. The deadline to drop students who are inappropriately enrolled is within the first 10 days of enrollment in a 4x4/semester course or the first 20 days of enrollment in a traditional yearlong course.

Please share this information with your principals and school test coordinators. If you have questions or need further clarification regarding information contained within this memo, please contact your Regional Accountability Coordinator (RAC).

RBG/TLH/whw

c: June St. Clair Atkinson, State Superintendent  
Adam Levinson, Interim Director, Office of Charter Schools  
Sneha Shah-Coltrane, Director, Advanced Learning and Gifted Education  
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Regional Accountability Coordinators  
LEA Test Coordinators

Attachment

## English II and North Carolina Final Exam Constructed Response Scoring/Return Dates for 2015–16

Test Cycle Window	NCTest Opens	Scoring Begins <sup>1</sup>	Return Time for Scores <sup>2</sup>	Online Testing Window Closes (NCTest Closes) <sup>3</sup>	Paper/Pencil Shipping Deadline <sup>4</sup>
<b>Fall 2015</b> Dec 1, 2015–Jan 29, 2016	November 9, 2015 <sup>5</sup>	December 8, 2015	<p>NCTest Online: 4–5 business days</p> <p>Paper-and-Pencil: 7–8 business days</p>	January 29, 2016	February 12, 2016
<b>Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM)</b> February 1–12, 2016	February 1, 2016	February 1, 2016		February 12, 2016 <sup>6</sup>	Paper administrations not permitted
<b>Spring 2016</b> Feb 22–June 28, 2016	February 29, 2016	May 6, 2016		June 24, 2016 <sup>7</sup>	June 20, 2016 <sup>7</sup>
<b>Summer 2016</b> July 1–August 24, 2016	July 1, 2016	July 8, 2016		August 26, 2016	August 24, 2016
<b>CDM</b> July 18–29, 2016	July 18, 2016	July 18, 2016		July 29, 2016	Paper administrations not permitted
<b>CDM</b> September 12–23, 2016	September 12, 2016	September 12, 2016		September 23, 2016	Paper administrations not permitted

<sup>1</sup>Tests are scored in order of receipt. Test records are scored independent of each other and will not be organized by LEA, school, or classroom especially in the case of NCTest online records.

<sup>2</sup>The count begins with the first business day following the receipt of the materials to be scored.

<sup>3</sup>Online test administrations and coding must be completed before 7:00 p.m.

<sup>4</sup>All paper/pencil materials must be shipped to the vendor by the deadline for each test cycle. Materials shipped after the deadline will not be scored until the next scoring window.

<sup>5</sup>Any online or paper-and-pencil test records received after November 9, 2015 will be scored starting on December 8, 2015.

<sup>6</sup>Any online or paper-and-pencil test records received after February 13, 2016 will be scored starting on May 6, 2016.

<sup>7</sup>Any online or paper-and-pencil test records received after this date will not be scored until July 8, 2016 and will not be included in 2015–16 accountability calculations.